judgement and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) of concerned countries takes place to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. Anti-bird measures are also undertaken.

Opening of Seabird Project Airport for Civilian Flights

3391. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka has requested opening the airport at Seabird Project, Karwar, for civilian flights by extending the existing runway;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Centre is asking the State Government to bear the cost on acquisition of the required 75 hectares of land, construction of the extended runway and its maintenance, etc;

(d) if so, considering that the land for Seabird Project was granted by Karnataka and that civilian service will promote tourism, agri-trade and exports, would the Centre bear the cost on land acquisition and runway extension to facilitate civilian operation; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) A Naval Air Station with 2,000 metres air strip is planned to be constructed during subsequent phases of the Project Seabird at Karwar. At present, there is no runway existing at the Project Seabird. The Government of Karnataka had requested the Ministry of Defence to extend the proposed runway from 2,000 metres to 3,000 metres for accommodating civil aircraft. The State Government was advised to consider acquisition of 75 hectares of additional land and transfer of the same to the Ministry of Defence free any cost/encumbrances for the proposed extension of the runway. The cost of construction and maintenance of extended runway and airfield will be additional. The Government of Karnataka has recently agreed to acquire 75 hectares of land for extending the runway of the Airport at Seabird Project, Uttar Kannada District and to transfer the same free of cost/encumbrances to

the Ministry of Defence. The land is yet to be acquired by the Government of Karnataka.

Representation given by Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (A)

3392. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received by Government from the Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (A) pertaining to discrimination and oppression faced by the Madheshis people living in plains and Tarai of Nepal, who are called as people of Indian origin and denied recruitment in Royal Nepal Army, for recruitment in Indian Army and creation of Madhesish Regiment in the Indian Army; and

(b) the action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government have received representation from the Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (A) for recruitment in the Indian Army and creation of Madhesish Regiment.

(b) As per the existing policy, no new Regiment is being raised on the basis of any class, creed and religion. However the Madheshis people living in the plains of Tarai of Nepal are eligible for recruitment in the existing Regiments of Gorkha Riffles subject to their meeting the requisite educational, physical, and medical standards and passing the recruitment tests.

Use of IAF aircrafts by former PM and Ministers

†3393. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether former Cabinet Ministers including former Prime Ministers have undertaken air-trips by IAF aircrafts during the period from 1st January, 2000 to 31st March, 2004 and till date;

(b) if so, the year-wise details of the trips undertaken by each of them separately;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi